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C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 000736

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR DRL/MLGA LYNN SICADE
DEPT ALSO FOR IO/RHS AMY OSTERMEIER

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SUBJECT: GUATEMALA: DEMARCHE ON UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

REF: STATE 61034

Classified By: DCM David Lindwall for reasons 1.4 (b,d)

¶1. (SBU) Poloff delivered reftel talking points on U.S. participation in the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) to Luis Carranza, Director for Multilateral Policy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Carranza expressed regret over the U.S. decision to withdraw from observer status in the UNHRC and said that U.S. disengagement would negatively impact the efforts of other countries to advance human rights issues in multilateral fora.

¶2. (SBU) Although Carranza said he was aware that the U.S. had had disagreements with the UNHRC, he was surprised by the USG decision and believes that other Latin American and European countries will be disappointed. Carranza agreed that the UNHRC is not working as well as it should and commented that the organization had unfortunately become politicized and less focused on "realities in the field." He noted, however, that the GOG supported the proposal to abolish country-specific Special Rapporteurs in favor of Universal Periodic Review. He highlighted the UNHRC's Special Session on Darfur as an instance where a broader venue had more of an impact on international opinion than a single opinion by a Special Rapporteur.

¶3. (C) Carranza underscored that Guatemala is a close ally of the U.S. and would be available as a surrogate should the U.S. need to bring a matter before the UNHRC. He also expressed hope that the USG would not wait until review of the Council in 2011 to reexamine its participation in the UNHRC.
Derham